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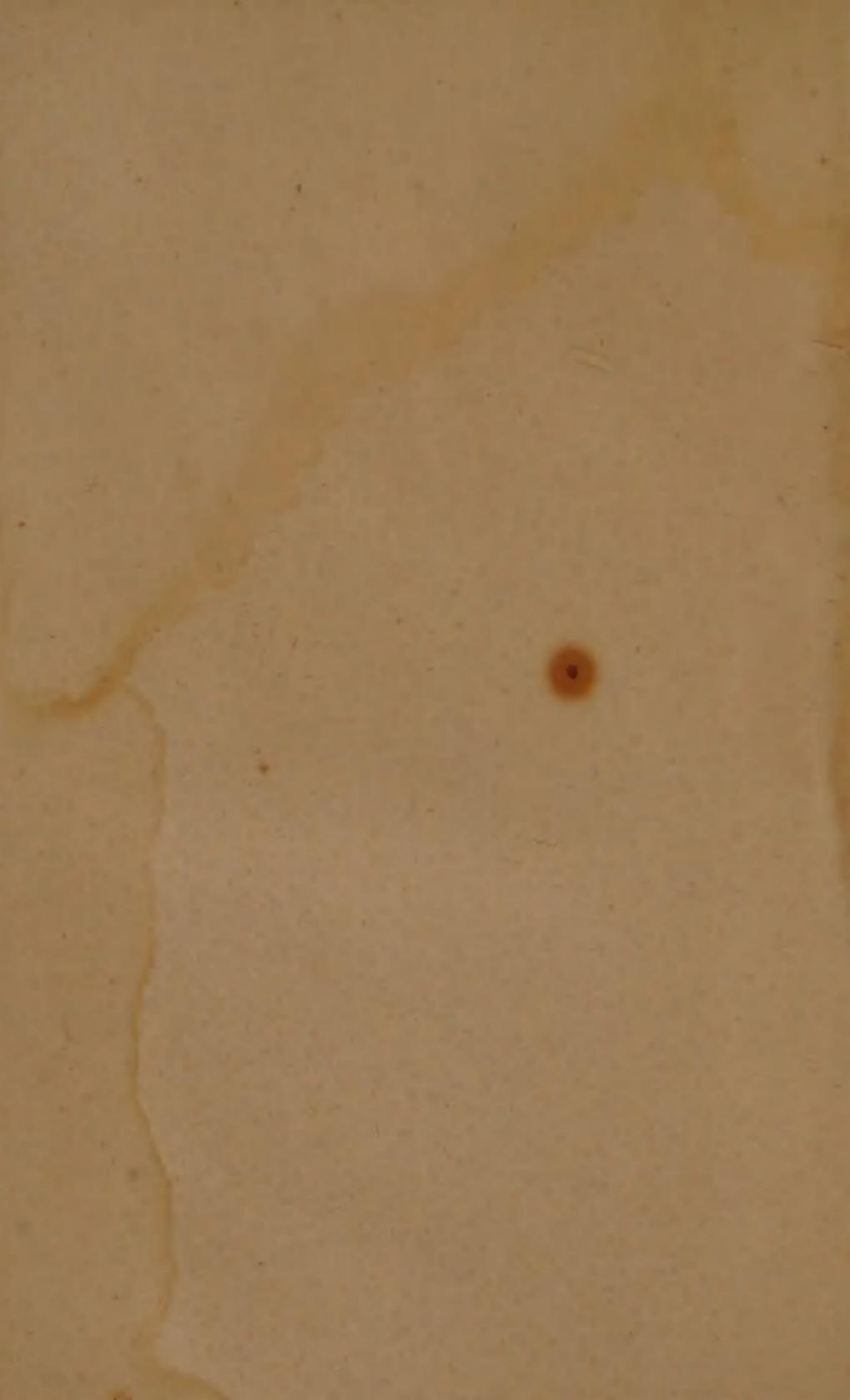
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THE  
CHILD IN HEAVEN,  
OR,  
THOUGHTS  
On the State of the Early Dead.



"Suffer the little children to come unto me."—*Mark X, 14.*

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BY REV. L. D. DAVIS.

*1D*

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## PREFACE.

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Death is ever active, and numbers among its victims all classes and conditions of the human race. Among those of tender years, whose first dawning life wins the strong affections of a parent's heart, it oftenest finds its choicest subjects. There are but few households that have not been marked by its footsteps. Many a parent still weeps unconciled at the loss of a darling child. To all such, and all indeed whose tears have fallen at the loss of friends in childhood, this little volume is offered. If it shall bring consolation and resignation to any such, and lead them to a correct appreciation of the affliction which seems to them so grievous, the object of the author will have been attained.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BURIED TREASURE.

“ Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,  
To damp our brainless ardors, and abate  
That glare of life which often blinds the wise.  
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth  
Our rugged path to death ; to break those bars  
Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws  
’Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make  
Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm.”

Life has, not unfrequently, been compared to a flower that cometh up and then fadeth away. And the figure is by no means inappropriate. So frail is man, so subject to sudden accident, so certain of finally becoming death’s victim, that he may well have for his representative, the fairest, and yet most insecure of nature’s products. At most his days on



earth are few, and they are generally shortened by his own imprudence; so that his life “is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” He enters upon the stage of active existence, passes a few fleeting years of vexation and sorrow, and is then cut down; for the decree has gone forth, “Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Though death approaches in various forms, there are none, in which he is not clothed with terror and dismay. He has been, not inaptly styled the “King of Terrors.” Sundering as he does, the dearest earthly ties, blasting the brightest hopes, and disappointing the fondest expectations, he may well be denominated the last, the greatest enemy of man.

No one is exempt from his approach.—None are able to resist his power. The aged and the young, the robust and the emaciated become equally and alike, the victims of his insatiate thirst. His is an unsparing hand. His empire is universal and unlimited.

When he summons the aged christian away, we can look with some degree of complacency on the solemn scene. Such an one is full of days and of honors. His allotted task on earth is accomplished; and as the ripe fruits in Autumn are gathered into the storehouse for safety and future use, so is he gathered by the mysterious reaper into the garner of the Lord, and employed in his Master's service. By the pressure of accumulating infirmities he is unfitted for usefulness

below. The weight of years is upon him. The glow of health is gone. The fires of fancy are extinguished. He can no longer enjoy the things of this world, and it is well for him to hear it said, "It is enough; come up higher."

But the aged alone do not listen to the mandate of the messenger of death. A ruthless scepter is swayed. Widely different are our emotions when we see the young, blooming with smiles, and clothed with beauty, yielding to his unsparing hand. Then we think of the good that might have been done, the friends that might have been cheered, and the joyous fruition which life's spring-time had promised. A chasm is before us. Dark shadows gather round, and we are awed by the mystery of the

providential stroke. It only remains for us to reverence and adore, for the Mind that orders all this for good is unsearchable, and past finding out.

“ Deep in unfathomable mines,  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sovereign will.”

Our emotions of surprise and grief are still quickened, when the smiling babe or prattling child is torn from its mother’s fond embrace, and is seen almost as soon as life is given, to yield it back to God. Strange that such a thing should ever be—that with a face outbeaming with innocence, a heart unstained by sinful passions, and a mind not yet informed as to the causes of death, it should be called to test such sad realities.

“ Oh! I should not have dreamed  
That death would touch a form so young and fair.”

But so it is. Many are the buds of promise that never blossom, the flowerets of hope that never yield their fruit, and the anticipations of future good that are not realized. As the bubble on the rolling stream is broken by the rapidity of the current, and becomes lost in the ocean of waters; as the dew-drop that empearls the flower glistens in the first rays of the rising sun, is then exhaled and disappears in vapory air; as the rose-bud just bursting into blossoms of beauty is nipped by the wind's untimely blast, and perishes forever; so the tender child with its budding mind, and expanding intellect, is suddenly cut down, and its spirit passes from earth to return no more. Very many of the fairest and loveliest of earthborn sons and daughters

pass quickly away ; and few indeed are those who have not wept the loss of loved ones, while as yet the tender years of childhood were upon them.

Reader ! hadst thou a child, a brother, sister, kindred, that in the morning of life went down to the grave ? And were thine affections so entwined around that little one, that thy heart became as a gushing fountain, when its spirit fled, and thou wert left alone ? Well mayest thou weep ; for beautiful to thine eye was the form, and pleasant to thine ear, the lisping tones with which thou wert then familiar. That was a child of promise. Anticipation had marked out for it a life of usefulness, and hope had crowned its pathway with rays of happiness and glory. All was fair and exult-

tant with delight. Thou wert happy then, and didst not dream that thy cup of sorrow would so soon be filled. But suddenly disease came on. No watchfulness could elude its approach; no earthly power could repel its influence. Gradually the little form wasted away, until the life-blood faded from its fair cheek; the last sweet smile wreathed its lovely face; the little pale hands were folded on its bosom; and calmly, quietly, its spirit passed from the tenement of clay.

“A gem it was of priceless worth—  
A sprig of purest bliss on earth  
            Of heavenly origin.  
Transferred to that perennial shore  
Where wintry blasts can chill no more  
            It blooms a flower of love.”

The cold grave holds now all that earth contains of the child that is dead. Thou hast marked the spot that encloses

thy buried treasure, and lovest occasionally to withdraw from the busy scenes of life and beside the lonely grave to commune with thine own heart, and with thy Maker. It is well to remember God in affliction's trying hours, to know that the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; and in quiet submission to exclaim, "blessed be the name of the Lord."

"God gave her; let thy troubled heart be still,  
For he hath taken her from toil and care,  
Bow then thy stricken spirit to his will,  
In holy trust that thou shalt meet her there."

And dost thou ask concerning the future? Wouldst thou know the will of God, with reference to the eternal destiny of the child that has gone before thee to the land of spirits? It is well to ask. God has been pleased to answer. The records of inspiration are before us. To

these we may go and find exhaustless riches of knowledge and of grace.— Through their pages, light, descending from above, rests upon the grave, and shows it to be the pathway to endless life. As we take the word of God into our hands, immortality is before us. The veil that hides the future is removed; the eye of faith is enabled to look beyond the river of death; and the heart is gladdened by the visions of glory that rise in the distance. Let us attend to the words of wisdom, and the voice of God, for there is balm in Gilead; there is a physician there.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

"Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,  
Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,]  
The soul can comfort, elevate and fill ;  
That only, and that amply this performs ;  
Lifts us above life's pains, her joys above ;  
Their terror those, and these their lustre lose."

We have seen our children die, and have beheld their bodies committed to the grave. The places where they were wont to be caressed by doting friends, and cheered by merry playmates, know them now no more forever. They are gone; and as that which is mortal sleeps beneath the grassy tomb, dust mingles with its mother dust. The process of de-

composition is constantly going on.— Softly we tread beside the little grave, and drop our tears of sorrow, but no voice is heard, no living form appears.— All is silent, save the wild wind as it blows over the burial spot, and makes its moan, as though grieving for the dead.

Shall silence always reign? Shall death forever wield an unbroken sceptre, or is there a star of hope that rises in the distance,—a ray of light emanating from the eternal throne, that disperses the darkness, and throws a halo of glory around the destiny of departed ones?— When our children die, can we know that they live again? Let us consider this question well, for if such knowledge is ours, the weeping mother may smile through her tears, and mourning friends

rejoice in the midst of their sorrows.

But where shall our testimony be obtained? The dead return not to tell us of the land beyond the grave. Uncertain hope is not sufficient. Vague and indistinct reason is far from being positive in her expressions. Yet to reason, we will first appeal, as giving the best knowledge which she possesses, and declaring in the clearest tones of which she is capable, the doctrine of man's immortality.

Her first argument which we will notice is based on the spirituality of the soul. So far as we know there are but two primary substances in the universe; and these are matter and spirit. They are distinguished by the properties which they are found to possess. Those objects

which exhibit the phenomena of matter and have its essential properties are material; and those which have not these primary qualities are immaterial, and spiritual in their nature.

It follows then, if the soul be not a spirit, it must possess all the essential properties of matter, and it can have no others. Take, for example, the possession of figure or form. Matter must occupy space; it cannot exist without it. If the soul be material, it must therefore be moulded into shape, must have its form, be subject to the laws of gravitation, and have a constant and natural tendency to the earth.

Again, matter is divisible. It can be cut, broken, or dissolved into parts, and its very nature requires divisibility, as

one of its essential characteristics. If the mind be not a spirit, it must have this quality also; and is capable of being divided *ad infinitum*. Thus it may be halved, quartered, &c., and yet each part retain all the essential qualities of the whole.

Inertia, or want of power, is also an inseparable feature connected with the existence of matter. Thus matter never acts unless acted upon, and is never in motion unless power from without is brought to bear upon it. But, as all know, the mind has the capability of self action; it wills, and thinks, and loves, and hates, without being operated upon by external objects.

If it is said that it is operated upon, we reply: if it be material, it can be af-

fected only by being brought in contact with other portions of matter, for one such object never acts upon another, only as their surfaces touch each other. But mind acts on mind by the presentation of motives without any physical contact.— This alone is sufficient to establish the fact that mind and matter are not the same.

If it be replied that mind is matter with volition and intelligence added, we rejoin : if it be material it must have all the essential properties of material substance, and it can have no others. If other powers are added, then there is something besides matter, and that "something" is what we call spirit. Thus, if in the structure of the mind, inertia is wanting, and intelligence is added, the point

is conceded, that man has a spiritual nature as well as a physical constitution. This line of argument might be drawn out at great length, but the above is sufficient for our purpose.

It follows then: if the soul be an uncompounded spiritual essence, it will not be destroyed by those agencies, that operate so fearfully on the body. Frost may kill the body, but can have no influence on a spirit. The furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, though heated seven times hotter than usual, may consume the material organism in a moment, but it has no power to destroy the mind. So with all the elements of destruction within the range of human knowledge. They are not adapted to an intangible and invisible spirit. The application of power

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through any of the agencies of destruction known to man cannot annihilate it.

"The soul, secure in her existence, smiles  
At the drawn dagger and defies its point."

That God can withdraw the powers with which he has endowed it, and repeal the laws which he has established concerning it, is not doubted. In no other way is its annihilation possible. Is there a probability that he will do this? Has he repented of his creature and changed the purpose evidently had in view when he imparted being to man? The very supposition is a reproach to Deity, for if it is true, his wisdom is impeached, and he is bereft of his immutability. But God is unchangeable. With him there is "no variableness nor shadow of turning." What he intended to do in the boundless past, it is still his purpose to

accomplish. That he intended man for everlasting duration is manifest from the spirituality of his being; that he continues to him the gift of immortality, is evident from the immutability of his counsels.

Consider, *secondly*, the capabilities of the mind. It possesses powers of expansion, and is capable of continued enlargement. God evidently intended it for constant improvement. In the earliest period of a child's existence it is unable even to recognize the hand that furnishes its daily food. There is no evidence of the exercise of its mental powers. But watch its progress to manhood. That mind expands and grows with every passing hour. Childish sports soon lose their charm, and the stern realities of life

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are grappled with and overcome. The laws of nature are investigated, the distances and orbits of the planets are measured, and their annual and diurnal revolutions determined with the minutest exactness, and with comparative ease.— By his powers of ingenuity the winds become his steeds, the ocean his pathway, and the lightning his courier. He sits down; the sun pauses and paints his picture with unerring precision. He rises up and goes forth; the products of all earth's zones are before him prepared for his use.

With all these rapid strides he never reaches a position from which he cannot ascend to loftier heights and grasp sublimer joys. So far as we know, there is no limit to his expansive powers. Every

new achievement but prepares the way for a greater. Eternity itself will not be too long for the consummation of the mighty purpose obviously had in view in the structure of the soul. Can it be that God has given these capabilities but to disappoint the fond expectations of the creature? that he has imparted these powers and implanted these desires but to mock and make him miserable? Such *must* be the conclusion, if we deny to man the opportunities which his nature demands. That bright eyed child of promise that was so suddenly cut down and consigned to the grave, possessed an intellect capable of indefinite extension. Are we to suppose that the purpose of the Creator has been accomplished by its short lived stay on earth? Ah, no! that mind

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must run its course, must continue forever, or nature in her most solemn revelations, becomes false to her trust, and unworthy the confidence of man.

“Say, can a soul possessed  
Of such extensive, deep, tremendous powers,  
Enlarging still, he but a finer breath  
Of spirits, dancing through their tubes awhile,  
And then forever lost in vacant air ?”

Such a sentiment is preposterous. It is in direct conflict with the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah. The only reasonable conclusion is, that these powers transferred to a more congenial clime, will live and glow forever.

“Cold in the dust this perished heart may lie,  
But that which warmed it once shall never die.”

*Thirdly.* We are compelled to believe in the soul’s immortality, unless we have some proof to the contrary. And is there any evidence that man is not immortal ? If any, it is found in the fact that he is sub-

ject to death ; that he passes off the stage of active life, and is seen on earth no more. Is this sufficient ? We know nothing of death only what we see with our own eyes, and its effects as seen relate only to the body. True, the limbs are palsied, the once wakeful pulse is still, and the heart ceases her throbings, but we know not as all this effects the existence of the soul. A great change has taken place, but change does not imply annihilation. The worm changes, and its house is destroyed, and it becomes the beautiful butterfly that flits in the summer's sun.—The little bird bursts the shell of its first habitation, and finds itself in a new world surrounded by ever increasing splendors, and, on expanded wing seeks glories that till now were not within its reach. Man

himself has changed. The infant has become the strong robust man, and *he* is changing still. This, however, is far from implying the destruction of his being.—The changes at death cannot be shown to be greater than those through which he has already passed. These have enlarged his powers and increased his joys, and the analogy strengthens rather than diminishes the idea of a future state.

“For these, new rising from the tomb  
With lustre brighter far shall shine  
Revive with ever during bloom  
Safe from diseases and decline.”

**Fourthly.** Analogy confirms the sentiment for which we plead. If man is not immortal then the annihilation of his spiritual nature must take place. But amid the various changes of the natural world no examples of entire destruction are furnished. Matter wastes away and disap-

pears, but invariably rises again and meets us in some new form, as it has entered into new compounds, and become united with new substances. So far as can be ascertained by the strictest research it never ceases to be. Take the most frail of material substances, subject it to the utmost pressure, grind it to atoms, expose it to the fire until you have expended your ingenuity; then pass it to your neighbor; let him repeat the process; let it go from laboratory to laboratory, from crucible to crucible, until an age is past, and what have you accomplished? Have you succeeded in annihilating it? By no means. You may have changed its form indefinitely, but not one particle has passed from existence. God takes care of what he has made. It requires

as much power to destroy an atom as to create a world. Allow then the inquiry: if God takes such care of matter, if he preserves it from all danger, if his decree has gone forth for its protection, will he not do as much for the soul? If a particle of matter can go through innumerable changes and perish not, is it unreasonable to conclude that the same may be true of the reasoning and thinking powers which we possess?

More than this; the mind, as we have seen, is not affected by the application of power through any material agency. It escapes the pincers, is unharmed by the power of the sword, passes unscathed through the fiery furnace, lives with the body or without it, in the dungeon, or in the palace, and no gnawing tooth

preys upon it. It is indivisible, intangible, and therefore indestructible. God has imparted life to it, and he has not endowed any of his creatures with sufficient power to take that life away.

"Ye cannot quench that spirit ; its bright fire  
When stars shall lose their brilliance and expire,  
And suns grow dim, and earth shall pass away,  
Will shine more lustrous through an endless day,  
When once in being, it must always be ,  
Its only measure is eternity.-"

*Fifthly.* Impartial justice demands another state of being. In looking over the pages of this world's history, we find that great diversity has always existed in human character. Some men have been monsters in vice. Trampling on the rights of those weaker than themselves, they have delighted to oppress the poor and rob the needy. By them, every principle of righteousness has been discarded,

while crimes of the darkest hue have been committed with impunity. Others have been lovers of virtue. Men fearing God, and walking uprightly among their fellows. Every day's observation has taught us that the measure of worldly happiness and prosperity has not been distributed according to these respective traits of character. For the most part the wicked bear rule. The most prosperous are often proud, self-sufficient, and unjust; while the virtuous have pined away in want, have died in prison for doing good, and not unfrequently for answering the demands of our most holy religion. Vice often goes unpunished, and virtue unrewarded on earth. The blood of murdered innocence often cries in vain for vengeance, for "on the side

of the oppressors there is power." From these well-known facts we must conclude that the author of our being is unmindful of right and wrong, that he harbors iniquity and cherishes crime, or that there is a future state, and the consequences of human actions reach onward, and those actions themselves are reviewed beyond the grave.

Allowing God to be just, he must continue our existence until justice is done to every one of his creatures. Such justice is not done on earth; therefore man must live again. The proud oppressor who has fattened on the toil, and sweat, and blood of the down-trodden slave, and who has gone unwhipt of justice here, needs another life, where the violated laws of righteousness shall assert their au-

thority, and exact the penalties affixed to their transgression. And the poor suffering victim; is there no ray of hope for him? no joyous future where he may dwell in peace and enjoy the life that God has given him? To him this world has been a vale of tears. Poverty and want, disappointment and outrage, sickness and scenes of death have been around him and pressed hard upon him through life. And did God create him for these, and these alone? Or is there a better land, a world of bright glory where every wrong shall be redressed? The moral government of God must extend beyond this world, or it cannot be regarded as "holy, just, and good." It must embrace both time and eternity, or it does not possess equity and righteous-

ness among its characteristics. But we know "there is no unrighteousness in him," therefore he must have secured to man another state of being.

*Sixthly.* We rest our next argument on the general wish and belief of mankind. No sane man wishes his buoyant spirit hushed in the stillness of eternal night. The very thought of ceasing to be blasts our hopes, destroys our sympathies, and chills the life's blood of the soul. Not merely the gay and happy desire immortality, but life in bonds, in the midst of wretchedness and want, is preferred to the destruction of our identity, especially when, as in human life, hope tinges the distant future with rays of happiness and glory. And

"Whence springs this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?"

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We answer, it is interwoven with the very constitution of our being. God has planted it in our nature, and the prince and the peasant, the civilized and the savage are equally possessed of

*"This secret dread, this inward horror  
Of falling into naught."*

Men not only wish, but expect to live forever. The christian is not the only one that looks to the future with anticipation of its possession ; but heathenism in almost every form contends for the same principle. Neither has the idea been confined to any one age ; it has run through all time, and pervaded all minds. The ancient mythologist and the modern Hindoo, the wandering Arab and the wild Indian, as well as the enlightened christian believer, have been animated and cheered by this glorious hope of existence beyond the grave.

This universal belief in everlasting duration is a strong argument in its favor. It must owe its existence, either to the voice of tradition, coming from those who held direct intercourse with God, or to a spontaneous growth in the human breast. Has it been handed down from age to age since the creation of man?—Then it must have come originally from God. Does it present itself instinctively to the human mind? Then, as a principle connected with our being, it must have been planted there by the fashioning hand of Jehovah. In either case, we are irresistibly carried back to God as the author of this sentiment. So deeply is it engraven on the heart, that men cannot divest themselves of the idea of a life to come. Logic may be employed, reason racked until the soul is

tortured with the effort; it will maintain its dignity and claim existence in a spirit land.

Thus the voice of reason, the analogy of nature, and the constitution of our being, teach us that our pathway leads to another world. Nothing could be more inconsistent than the chilling theory of annihilation. There is not a shadow of proof in favor of such an idea.

*Lastly.* We add one more testimony which of itself establishes the point under consideration. Revelation declares it. The Deity speaks, and in tones not to be mistaken, brings life and immortality to light.

We have already attempted to show from the phenomena of mind, that man possesses a spiritual as well as a physical constitution. That the scriptures teach

this, and at the same time declare the immortality of his spiritual nature, is seen by reference to the following passages: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the *spirit* shall return to the God who gave it." Ecl. 12, 7. "Fear not them which kill the *body* but are not able to kill the *soul*, &c." Math. 10, 28.

"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." 2 Cor. 5, 8.

These texts so clearly establish the distinction between the body and spirit of man, as to leave no place for doubt. And while one returns to dust, the other goes back to the God who gave it; thus plainly implying its existence while the body mingles with the elements from which it was formed.

This truth is also taught in the translation of Enoch and Elijah, who, without tasting death, were taken from earth to the blissful regions of eternal life.—That they continue to live, is evident from the descent of one of these in company with Moses at the transfiguration of Christ. In this instance, three apostles saw two inhabitants of the heavenly world, and listened awhile to their conversation, carried on in language which they themselves understood. This proves that the soul does not sleep, even between death and the resurrection, but maintains a state of conscious identity during the interim.

Our Lord ascended to heaven in the presence of his disciples, having given them this assurance, “I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare

a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also." John 14, 3. We are elsewhere taught that this place "is a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. V, 1. As a *house*, it implies the residence of God's family, of unfallen angels and redeemed spirits, sweetly united by the mutual ties of perfect love and holiness. It is "eternal," and shall therefore be the everlasting abiding place of his people. They go in, to go out no more forever. Immortality is stamped upon its walls, and interwoven with the constitution of all its inhabitants.

St. Stephen, just before his death, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glo-

ry of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God; to whom he prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." Acts 7, 55. That prayer was doubtless answered, for immediately "he fell asleep."

St. John, the disciple that Jesus loved, as he was on the isle of Patmos, was blessed with a view of the happy world where myriads of departed spirits have taken up their abode. He saw "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and they cried with a loud voice, &c." He also beheld "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and

before the Lamb ;” and was permitted to hear their songs of triumph as they sung, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever.”

Rev. 7, 12.

These, with innumerable other portions of scripture, prove the existence of the soul after death. It is the superstructure of the entire christian system. Every doctrine of revealed religion is based upon this fact. To doubt it, is to disbelieve the Bible, falsify reason, give the lie to nature, and plunge into all the horrors of atheism. No thinking mind *can* doubt it. It is a truth known and read of all men. Man must live forever.

“Immortality o’ersweeps  
All pains, all tears, all fears—aud peals  
Like the eternal thunders of the deep  
Into my ears this truth :—Thou livest forever.”

Then mourn not for the dead as though they had ceased to be. They are gone; but the dark shadows of annihilation have not been permitted to approach them.— It was sad indeed to part with that little one, so full of promise to thyself and to the world. But though so dreaded, the parting hour came on. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Its days on earth were few, but they are now merged into eternal life. The bodily eyes are closed, but the spiritual vision already takes in the glories of paradise. When you think of that child, think of it not as in the grave, but as rejoicing in the noon-tide glories of the heavenly spheres, as mingling with the seraphim and cherubim around the throne; yea, as being itself an angel in heaven. Think of the

danger it has escaped, and the bliss it has secured;—of the tears that might have fallen, and the eyes that now never weep. O think of God, and heaven, and immortality.

“Judge not the Lord by feeble sense.

But trust him for his grace,  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.

“Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan his work in vain,  
God is his own interpreter  
And he will make it plain.”

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

“Grave, the guardian of our dust,  
Grave, the treasury of the skies,  
Every atom of thy trust  
Rests in hope again to rise ;  
Hark ! the judgment trumpet calls—  
Soul rebuild thy house of clay ;  
Immortality thy walls,  
And eternity thy day.”

The immortality of the soul is, as we have seen, one of the most cheering truths known to man. It connects his life on earth with an eternal existence beyond the boundaries of time, and elevates him in the scale of being to an alliance with angels and with God. It points the believer of the Bible to a treasure that is “incorruptible and undefiled,” and

supports him while pursuing its undisturbed possession. When his friends fall around him, he is sustained by the assurance that though they pass through death's portals, it is to a land of spirits bright, where ties are never sundered, and parting is never known. Thus he sojourns on earth with joyful aspirations, and even enters the dark valley and shadow of death in holy triumph.

As such, immortality is frequently the theme of discourse, as well as the subject of pious meditation. No sooner do our friends die, than we turn to the doctrine of eternal life and seek consolation in its divine influence. With an eye of faith, their ransomed spirits are seen reposing in the bosom of God, their Creator, and endowed with an existence parallel with

eternity. They dwell forever beside the river of life, and it is well to gaze on the scene and adore the God who has imparted such a gift to man.

There is another truth taught by the same word of inspiration, so nearly allied to this, that the two should never be separated,—a doctrine which, with equal distinctness, proclaims the perpetuity of our being. It is that of the resurrection, identity, and immortality of the body.

There is no principle more clearly presented by the sacred penman than this; and upon none did they dwell with more earnestness and delight. The apostles associated “Jesus and the Resurrection” in nearly all their discourses and epistles. They have assured us, that not only the spirit that is in man should have

continued existence, but also that the frail and wasting tenement, having slept awhile in the dust of earth, should awake and come forth, and be fitted for everlasting duration. This is a doctrine of deep and abiding interest to us as well as them, for if true, we too must feel the resurrection power of Almighty God.— When once firmly established in our minds, we are enabled to consign the friends that die before us to the cold and silent grave,

“In sure and certain hope  
That they shall rise again.”

“These ashes, too, this little dust,  
Our Father’s care shall keep ;  
Till the last angel rise and break  
The long and dreary sleep.”

The term, *resurrection*, precludes all idea of the creation of a new body. It

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means a rising again; a coming up, as from a lower to a higher position. When applied to the dead, it conveys the same general idea. Their bodies are to come up from the grave, rising from dust into life, and form, and beauty. Such is the promise of God which he will take care to fulfill.

This can be effected, only by the miraculous display of the divine energy; and the manner of its accomplishment is not, therefore, to be accounted for by any system of philosophy, or explained by any course of reasoning. It is high above the province of human intellect; and though the fact may be known and believed, through the force of abundant testimony, the agencies by which it is to be effected are among "the secret things that

belong to the Lord our God." Though above reason, it is by no means contrary to it. The human mind has boundaries beyond which it cannot pass, and to assume that everything lying without those narrow limits is opposed to its constitution, is highly absurd. The fact, as revealed, is sufficiently plain for the comprehension of every mind; the mysteries connected with it, are doubtless so deep as to confound the intellect of both angels and men.

The difficulties that have been started in the way of a literal resurrection, by speculative theorists, must have their foundation in the supposition that God is not omnipotent. Allow him to be "the Almighty," and nothing is difficult. He can as easily gather up our scattered dust,

and mould it into form, and fit it for the skies, as he can cause the seed planted in the earth to germinate and bring forth its characteristic fruit. To assume, as objectors have often done, that, because of the decomposition and dispersion of the particles composing the body, and their union with other substances, a literal resurrection is impossible, is to limit the power and impeach the wisdom of the Deity. "Cannot the Chemist take a piece of fine gold into his laboratory, file it to powder, dissolve it with acids, alloy it with other metals, grind it again to powder, throw it into the fire and mingle it with soot, ashes and charcoal, and yet bring out the same fine gold? And cannot he mould it again in the same die, and be perfectly sure it is the same gold? And is the

God of power and wisdom, whose laboratory is the universe, less skilled than the creatures which he has made? And cannot He who is intimately present to every particle of matter, who knows every particle by name, and whose power has brought every particle into being, collect together again the scattered fragments of the human frame, although mingled with the elements, and driven to the four winds of heaven? May we not reply to those making this objection, ‘ye do err, not knowing the scriptures *nor the power of God?*’”

The divine resources are not so feeble, neither are the designs of Jehovah so circumscribed that “difficulties” can prevent their being carried out. His grand purposes must be accomplished, for his

thoughts are not as our thoughts, and his ways are not as our ways.

The only question to be considered then, is, what does the Bible teach on the subject. This is the law and the testimony. Whatsoever is here promised will most certainly be fulfilled. God has not undertaken more than he can perform, nor declared that which will not remain forever true. If the scriptures teach that the body will be raised, no state of decomposition or intermixture with other bodies can possibly prevent it.

Some of the early persecutors of christianity supposed that they could prevent the resurrection of the martyrs after they were burned, by gathering up their ashes and throwing them to the winds that they might be scattered abroad on the

earth. Sometimes they cast them upon the waters of a passing river, that they might thus be borne to the ocean and deposited in its depths. But how vain the efforts of man while contending against God. Those ashes may have been blown by ten thousand winds, and tossed by ten thousand waves; they may have fattened the soil, been absorbed in growing plants, and entered into the composition of other bodies, yet far easier than the chemist could separate the fine gold from its alloy, can God gather the scattered dust, and fashion it according to his will. God is omnipotent, and his word is truth.

That the Old Testament contains this doctrine, is evident from the consideration, that it was known and believed by the Jews, the Sadducees alone, who were

little better than infidels, excepted. As this is purely a doctrine of revelation, they must have obtained it from their scriptures. Indeed they always claimed it as a truth, declared by the records of inspiration. The following are among the numerous passages wherein it is taught:

“Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eye shall behold, and not another.”—Job. XIX, 26.

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.—Awake and sing ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.” Is. XVI, 19.

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from

death. O, death! I will be thy plagues!  
O, grave! I will be thy destruction!"—  
Hos. XIII, 14.

"Many of them that sleep in the dust  
of the earth shall awake, some to ever-  
lasting life, and some to everlasting shame  
and contempt."—Dan. XII, 2.

Notwithstanding repeated attempts  
have been made to fritter away the plain  
import of these passages, there need be  
no doubt, but that the general resur-  
rection is here spoken of, and that patri-  
archs and prophets had clear conceptions  
of this truth and rejoiced in hope of its  
fulfillment.

In the New Testament, this, with all  
other evangelical doctrines, is clearly  
brought to light. With this before us,  
no clouds of uncertainty gather around

the tomb, or darken the hopes of those who go down to the grave. Our friends have sickened and died, and we have seen them borne to the house appointed as the final resting place for all the living. Their abode is silent, their slumber is deep. But with this testimony in our hands we know they shall awaken in the last day, as it shall be proclaimed that time is no more.

“Marvel not at this,” said the Son of Man, “for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John, 5, 28–9.

This is from the highest possible au-

thority. A declaration from God incarnal; Immanuel, or God with us. Terms more positive could not well be employed. They fell from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake; and who taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

St. Paul also declares, while speaking by the spirit of inspiration, that "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor. XV, 21 and 3. And again, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven wih a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God;

and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with God.”—1 Thes. IV, 16, 17.

Having noticed these few of the multitude of sayings that abound in the word of God, in which the same general idea is conveyed, let us turn our attention to another class of Scriptures intimately connected with this subject. God has not only taught us by prophecy, and assured us by promise, but in addition to these has given us visible illustration of his resurrection power.

In considering the case of Enoch and Elijah, who were translated, we learn that the body as well as the soul lives

with God and Christ in heaven. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him," soul and body to the unseen world. Though there was no human eye to witness his ascension, the scriptural account is sufficiently clear and satisfactory. Elijah took his seat in the chariot of fire, drawn by the horses of fire, which were sent from heaven, to convey him to a world of bliss, while the astonished Elisha beheld the glorious scene. Here was a faithful witness, in the person of his friend and successor in office, who has given his testimony to the world; testimony confirmed by the translated prophet, as he stood with his glorified body, and conversed with Moses and the Messiah on the Mount of Transfiguration. These cases furnish positive proof of the exist-

ence of the same body in heaven, as is possessed on earth, for they suffered no decomposition or decay, as in the case of those that sleep in the grave. They were doubtless refined, glorified and rendered immortal, as will be the bodies of all those saints, who are living when the closing scenes of time shall be transacted.

We next consider the resurrection of Christ. As this is made, both a pledge and pattern of that of all believers, it is worthy of especial attention. That he arose from the dead, it is not necessary to offer any detailed proof. He died and was buried ; on the third day he arose again according to the scriptures. The disappearance of the body while it was so strongly guarded by the Roman soldiery, the evident confusion of the Jews

and their inconsistent apologies, the declaration of the angel, the testimony of the disciples, and his ascension in the presence of numerous eye witnesses, establish the fact beyond a doubt. That he possessed the same body after as before the resurrection is also evident to every reader of the Gospels. It bore the prints of the nails in his feet and hands, the wounds made by the soldier's spear was in his side, and the general appearance remained the same. No intimation is given to the contrary. He allowed every requisite opportunity to test the reality of his triumph over death, so that even a doubting Thomas became convinced, and exclaimed in astonishment and delight, "My Lord and my God."

Thus Jesus became the first fruits of

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them that slept; and as the first fruits are a sure pledge of the harvest, so his resurrection is a sure pledge of ours. His is an example of that which is to follow. Said the apostle to the Gentiles: "And God hath both raised up the Lord Jesus and will raise us up by his own power." 1 Cor. VI, 14. And again: "Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and present us with you." 2 Cor. IV, 14. Here a comparison is made between the resurrection of Christ and that of his followers, and nothing exists to indicate a dissimilarity in the two cases. On the other hand the language used is calculated to make the impression that *as* Christ was raised up, *even so* shall we be raised up in the last day, when he shall come to

make up his jewels. By his power the bands of death have been sundered, the king of terrors vanquished, and a certain promise of immortal existence given to dying men.

“The Lord hath risen indeed;  
The grave hath lost its prey;  
With him shall rise the ransom’d seed,  
To reign in endless day.”

It is said also, that when he yielded up the ghost, “The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints that slept, arose and came out of their graves, after his resurrection, and appeared unto many.”

Math. XXVII, 37.

If any doubt remained as to the fate of our bodies, the above is sufficient to

remove it. Prophecy, promise and example are before us, and their influence is combined. With reference to these examples there were abundant witnesses. Christ showed himself to above five hundred at once, besides on numerous other occasions, when he was seen by his disciples and entered into conversation with them. The number of saints that arose was considerable, and they appeared unto many, as they went into Jerusalem, and mingled again in the scenes of earth. We know nothing of them further than what is given in the record already quoted.—The account is plain, though curiosity vainly wishes it were extended, that we might know their history through succeeding changes.

In the celebrated discourse of St. Paul

to the Corinthians we have an outline of the properties of the resurrection body. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is shown in dishonor; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." Let us by adopting the language of another,\* examine these important particulars.

"First, the body "is sown in corruption; but it is raised in incorruption." In the present state of mortality, the body of man is perpetually passing from one state to another. It comes into the world weak and helpless; it rises into strength and vigor; and then it decays under the weight of age and infirmity. The materials of which it is composed are always

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\* J. Edmondson.

changing, so that after the lapse of a few years, it returns to the dust from whence it was taken. There it returns to corruption and lies in ruin, till the resurrection of the dead.

“But the resurrection body never changes. Those materials that form its nature, when it rises again will remain unchanged the same forever. For that which changes may die, and that which dies is mortal; but the body of man, in glory, is immortal. It passes not from one stage to another, but remains the same from age to age. There it will be ever beautiful and young. It will bloom with immortality; and will be ever safe from “diseases and decline.” For that which is not corruptible must necessarily remain in a perpetual state of vigor, and free from weakness and pain.

“Secondly. “It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.” It has been dishonored by sin. View it when the cruel hand of death has deprived it of life. The eye, once so bright, is dim; the ears which caught every sound are closed; the tongue, which charmed with its eloquence is silent; the countenance once so light and beautiful, is pale; and corruption with rapid haste is bringing the whole body into a state of ruin. That which was beautiful to the eye, now becomes frightful; and the living are glad to bury the dead.

“But the glory of the resurrection body will far exceed our present conceptions. The sun in his glory, is a fine emblem of the glory which will then be put upon the human body. We could not, now

behold it and live. It would overpower the eye of a frail mortal, and frighten the stoutest heart, like the glory of the Lord, which shone round about the shepherds in Bethlehem, when they were keeping watch over their flocks by night. They were sore afraid when the glory of celestial spirits burst upon their view, in the darkness of the night; and it is highly probable, though not recorded, that the angel of the Lord gave them strength to behold the glory which shone upon them; and we shall be strengthened in a future state to behold the glory of the resurrection body.

“Thirdly. “It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.” The weakness of man at the close of life is well known. All his powers fail. The eye is weak;

the hearing dull; the hands shake; the knees tremble; and he is afraid of that which is high. His strength departs; his infirmities increase; and in great weakness he sinks into the silent grave.

“But the body will be raised again in power. Every property of the resurrection-body will be strong and vigorous; and after the sleep of death, we shall have renewed strength both to do the will of God, and to enjoy the pleasures of glory. There weakness and weariness will be unknown; and we shall be like the angels of God who excel in strength. And that which is best of all, is the prospect of everlasting strength and power, after we are called from the tomb: a power that will never abate, in any degree, but increase with the duration of eternal ages.

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“Fourthly. ‘It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.’ By a natural body we are to understand an animal body, maintained and supported by food, and air, and sleep: a body depending on the elements, and subject to constant change. Now in health, then in sickness; now full, then hungry; now strong and vigorous, then weak and feeble; now an infant, then a man; and now in the bloom of life, and then in decrepit old age. All these changes end in the grave, where the animal body is decomposed and returns to dust.

“But it will be raised a spiritual body, so much refined, and so nearly allied to pure spirits as not to need any animal refreshment for its support. When all the gross properties of animal nature are

removed, the body will be a proper medium of communication for the celestial spirit, with the material and visible creation; and it will be allowed that God can refine the material nature to such a degree, as to make it a fit habitation for a glorified spirit. But it will still retain, in the highest state of refinement, those properties of matter that are entirely distinct from the properties of pure spirits.

"The resurrection body, when glorified, may still bear some resemblance to the present body. It is well known that the body undergoes many changes in this life; but it never loses its identity, or its general characteristic appearance. Whatever changes take place in us from youth to old age, we still retain those features by which we are distinguished

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from one another. Therefore we infer, that whatever beauty or glory may adorn the resurrection body, it will be known to be the same that died and was buried. It will bear such a resemblance to our present body, that it will be known by all who knew it before."

How glorious the promise which God has given us through the death of his Son. Reason is almost overwhelmed at the thought of such surpassing splendor. We strive in vain to measure the length and breadth and height and depth of the glory that awaits us. With the Bible in our hands, and the revelation of God before us, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." The

Christian exclaims with delight, It is enough! even so, Lord Jesus. To be like Christ as he appears in heaven, clothed with his glorified body, must satisfy the highest ambition of fallen man. We cannot hope to equal him, but we shall resemble him in his indescribable glories; "for he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. III, 21. He will shine with a resplendence that will fill all heaven with wonder and delight; and we shall shine like him though in a less degree. "Behold," says the apostle; "I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised in-

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corruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. xv. 51-4.

This lively view of a happy resurrection is a source of solid comfort in the hour of affliction. Nothing could do more toward destroying the terror which death inspires, than the prospect of a final triumph over the grave. That prospect is before us; that hope is ours; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and though heaven and earth shall pass away, one jot or tittle of his word shall never fail.

That friends shall recognize, and greet each other in the future world is highly probable. The identity of every person both in his material and spiritual nature will be preserved, amid all the changes through which we shall pass. The mother will see her little one, and know that it is the same that was so rudely snatched away from Earth; nor will the ties of affection be weakened, nor the strength of love diminished, by the changes through which both have passed. And the child, an angel now, shall welcome friends and kindred to that land where there is no more death. Oh happy, happy morn, that is followed by no evening shade: when the slumbering dead shall awake to sleep no more; when in holy triumph over Earth's latest foe

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the nations shall arise, and be crowned through redeeming grace with the glories of immortality.

“Behold, what heavenly prophets sung,  
Is now at last fulfilled ;  
And Death yields up his ancient reign,  
And vanquished, quits the field.

“Let Faith exalt her joyful voice,  
And now in triumph sing :—  
Oh Grave, where is thy victory ?  
And where, Oh Death, thy sting ?”

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN SECURED THROUGH CHRIST.

"Bold Infidelity, turn pale and die !  
Beneath your feet, an infant's ashes lie ;  
    Say, is it lost or saved ?  
If death 's by sin, it sinned, for it is here ;  
If heaven 's by works, in heaven it can't appear .  
    Reason, oh, how depraved !  
Revere the Bible's sacred page ; the knot 's untied ,  
It died, for Adam sinned : it lives, for Jesus died."

We have seen in the light of nature, reason and revelation, that the soul does not die with the body, but enters at once upon a state of conscious existence beyond the grave; and also that the body though returned to dust will ultimately be raised, re-animated, and endowed with immortality, in its re-union with the spirit from which it had been sepa-

rated. These are glorious truths. They are clearly presented by the Almighty Creator in his wondrous works of nature and grace, and are among the principal sources of consolation to those who mourn the loss of friends by the cold and cruel hand of death. Though our children die we know they live again ; and though their bodies molder in the grave, they shall once more bear the impress of Deity, as they shall be fashioned anew after the image of the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. The eye of faith sees the promises of God, in their wondrous fulfillment, and the vision turns our mourning into rejoicing, and our weeping into songs of praise.

The only remaining question relates to their salvation and consequent happiness

in the world to come. If, as we have fondly hoped, they dwell forever at the right hand of God, in the enjoyment of his favor, and the possession of his glory, we can see at once that our loss becomes their infinite gain: and while mourning our loneliness, we rejoice in their triumphs through grace divine. The exchange which they have made is a happy one: and as we weep below, they engage in ceaseless songs of praise, to “him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.”

All persons, who inherit eternal life, are saved through the atoning merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the mediator between God and man. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given

among men, whereby we must be saved." Persons dying in infancy, if saved at all, must become heirs of heaven, through him that hath loved us and given himself for us. All men are by nature the children of wrath? Grace alone can restore them to the favor of God, and bestow upon them the rich blessings of eternal life.

"Grace! 't is a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear;  
Heaven with the echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.

"Grace first contrived a way,  
To save rebellious man:  
And all the steps which grace display,  
Which drew the wondrous plan.

"Grace, all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,  
And well deserves our praise."

The application of the atonement to infants and their salvation in heaven, is as much a doctrine of revelation as any

subject treated of in the Bible. The idea, so often entertained, that the Scriptures leave this, one of the most important questions with which we are concerned, in an unsettled state, is in open conflict with the known character and will of God. Man is in covenant relation with his Maker. The nature of that covenant, the persons included in it, and the result of observing its conditions and requirements constitute the evangelic features of the gospel. To suppose the Bible silent with reference to so large a portion of the human family, as die in infancy, is not only inconsistent, but also contrary to matter of fact. God has spoken; and we appeal directly to the sacred page, and rest our only hope of salvation on what is therein declared.

To understand the doctrine of infant salvation through Christ, it will be necessary, first, to consider the transgression of Adam and its influence on his descendants. That our first parent was created with a holy constitution, follows as a matter of necessity, from the known character of Jehovah. He must have possessed a nature perfect and sinless, or God must have done violence to some of the plainest principles of his being. The sacred historian says that he "created him in his own image, in the image of God created he him;" which, whatever else it may imply, most certainly includes a similarity of moral character. The term "image" means likeness or resemblance. If God be holy, that which is impure and unholy cannot resemble

him, as man is said to have done. The subsequent history of the temptation and fall is also conclusive proof of his original exaltation. Solomon states the same truth when he declares that "God made man upright," and the sentiment is confirmed by every one of the inspired writers.

Had man remained obedient he would have retained the image of God forever, and like unfallen angels, rejoiced in the glory of his presence. But he did not. Scarcely is the account of his creation ended, than it is clouded by that of the degradation of his character. By sin his nature became vitiated, and he was dispossessed of those principles of holiness which he originally enjoyed. His was then a fallen nature, an image marred, a

constitution defiled. In consequence of his apostasy, he became a vagabond, driven from a glorious paradise, into a cursed wilderness, which every where still bears the stamp of desolation for his sake.

From his person thus fallen, has descended the whole human family. When he begat a son, it is said to have been "in his own likeness;" which seems to imply opposition between the likeness of God in which Adam was made, and the likeness of Adam in which his son was begotten. His son did not bear the image of God, as would have been the case had Adam remained unfallen; and as he possessed a different constitution from that which was at first granted, it seemed important to declare it, which

was clearly done in the language already referred to. This teaches us that human nature, now corrupt, could not propagate itself without corruption, and the language was probably employed to exclude the idea that the image of God was hereditary in man. No stream can rise higher than the fountain from which it flows, neither could the descendants of Adam possess a purer nature than the ancestry from which they sprung. According to the invariable laws of Providence, our first parents could not communicate a nature different from that which they themselves possessed. They had lost the angelic holiness which was at first given them, and consequently could not transmit it to their posterity. "Besides," says Mr. Fletcher, "Adam contained in him-

self as in miniature all his posterity. The various nations of men are nothing but different branches from that original root. They are Adam, or man existing at large: as the branches of a spreading oak, with all the acorns that have grown upon and dropped from them, during a long succession of summers, are nothing but the original acorn, unfolding and multiplying itself with all its essential properties. It is then as ridiculous to wonder that the sons of depraved Adam should naturally be depraved, as that an acorn should naturally produce an oak, and a poisonous root a malignant plant."

That infants possess a fallen nature is also proven by observation and experience. No sooner do they attain sufficient maturity to know their duties than they

disregard them: to distinguish between good and evil, than, passing by the good, they freely and uniformly choose the path of sin and folly. This cannot be merely from the force of example, for all examples are not bad; and if they were so, the subject would not be relieved, for the question at once arises: How happens it that holy beings invariably set unholy examples, and live in vice and sin? Neither can it be the result of education, for almost uniformly their education is better than their practice. Nothing is now more certain, than that every child, however amiable in its constitution, however perfect the examples set before it, and however sanctified its education, will, upon arriving at an age of accountability, commit sin against

God: "for there is none that doeth good, no, not one." This natural bias to evil, this taint of the moral constitution, is what is sometimes meant by the phrase "original sin," although these terms do not of themselves convey a correct statement of the case.

Our personal experience corroborates the fact which we learn from observation on the habits and lives of others. Every man is conscious of a native propensity to evil: of a disposition that leads him astray from God, and the ways of holiness. He can refer to no period as the origin of this disposition. It manifests itself in early childhood, and clings to him, like an incubus, through life's weary pilgrimage. The good man contends with it as with an armed enemy, and is

freed from it only by the superabounding grace of God, as it is displayed in the plan of redemption by Christ.

That which is so evident to the candid observer is also expressly taught in the Word of God. Solomon, the wisest of men, informs us that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;" and not of a child only, for he says again: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live." Jeremiah confirms the sad truth by declaring: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." St. Paul asserts that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be," for that law is spiritual, and is only spiritually discerned. Our Savior Jesus Christ said

that "men loved darkness rather than light because *their deeds were evil*;" and for the same reason he represents the world as hating him, and those that were like him. It is not necessary to follow further the sacred penmen as they draw the disagreeable picture, and hold it up to our view. Enough is here presented to convince us of our lost estate. With Watts we exclaim

"Lord, we are vile, conceived in sin,  
And born unholy and unclean:  
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall  
Corrupts his race, and taints us all."

In view of this depraved nature, it has been often said that "all men are born in a state of condemnation and exposed to eternal death." When we view ourselves in the light of the Gospel, such a result by no means follows. This natural

depravity is our misfortune and not our fault. It was brought upon us by the transaction of another, and by no act of our own. We suffer from it as the child of the inebriate suffers from the dissipation of the father. That dissipation is the fault, the *sin*, only of him who is the author of it. It is the misfortune of all his descendants in that his property is squandered, disease engendered, and numerous other evils inflicted. They suffer on account of the sin of their ancestor, but by no means share in his guilt. To condemn and expose them to severe pains and penalties, would be both unjust and cruel. And if so in the case supposed, how much more so in the case of the offspring of offending Adam. To suppose, as is often done, that his act is passed

over, and imputed to his posterity so as to render them personally guilty before God, is inconsistent with the moral attributes of Deity. It plainly conflicts with the display of righteousness in the administration of Divine government, for it represents the law as condemning the innocent on account of the transgression of the guilty. It should be remembered that there is a wide difference between inheriting the fallen nature which Adam possessed, and sharing the responsibility of the act by which that nature became depraved. The former is in accordance with both the laws of nature and revelation ; the latter is at once unreasonable and contrary to the oracles of God.

To escape the inconsistency connected with the idea of the strict and literal

imputation of Adam's guilt, many have been led to reject the doctrine of human depravity altogether. This may be regarded as running from one extreme to the other ; as getting rid of one error by embracing others equally fatal. The corruption of our nature through the offence of the first Adam, and the condemnation of our persons thereby, do not necessarily go together. The Gospel reveals a middle way in which the sons of fallen Adam are redeemed and saved ; a plan of atonement by which his descendants are justified from the guilt of his sin, and constituted heirs of eternal life.

We have already seen by an appeal to the sacred oracles that our first parents fell from their original state of holiness, whereby they became deeply depraved ;

and that as a legitimate sequence their descendants are born with a corrupted nature. It should be remembered however that before any issue proceeded from them, they were pardoned and restored to the Divine favor. Had they not been thus restored the penalty of death must have been forthwith inflicted upon them, and with them must have perished the human race. The transactions of that period did not terminate with Adam, but comprehended in their scope the entire human family. In the formation of our first parents, God had created a world of beings that were to spring from them. With reference to all the inhabitants of the earth, the work of creation was ended, and a seminal existence granted. When we contemplate Adam, we are not to

consider him as standing alone, and acting simply for himself, for he was the head and representative of the teeming millions that were yet to come upon the stage of active life. When he fell, all his descendants fell with him. When sentence of death was pronounced against him, it passed on all men that possessed existence in and through him. Had he, in the day that he partook of the forbidden fruit, suffered the infliction of temporal death, all must have suffered, for none would have remained to propagate the species on earth.

And so with the covenant of pardon and salvation: it did not end with him, but comprehended all his race. When he was condemned, all having existence in him were condemned: when he was

restored, they also shared in the pardoning mercy of God. All this, however, took place with reference to their seminal existence only, and the very fact that they are blessed with life, shows them to be under a dispensation of mercy. By the fall, the privileges of the first probation were forfeited: by the promised Messiah, and through faith in his name, the forfeiture was not taken, and a second season of trial was granted. This point is made plain by such as the following passages of Scripture:

“Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners;

so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 18, 19.

"In these words," remarks Mr. Watson in his Theological Institutes, "the sin of Adam and the merits of Christ are pronounced to be co-extensive: The words applied to both are precisely the same: '*judgment* came upon ALL MEN:' 'the FREE GIFT came upon ALL MEN.' If the whole human race be meant in the former clause, the whole human race is meant in the latter also: and it follows; that as all are injured by the offense of Adam, so all are benefited by the obedience of Christ. Whatever therefore that benefit may be, all children dying in infancy must partake of it, or there would be a large proportion of the human race upon whom the 'free gift,' the effects of

the ‘righteousness of one’ did not come, which is contrary to the apostle’s words.

“The free gift, however, which has come upon all men by the righteousness of one is said to be unto ‘justification of life:’ the full reversal of the penalty of death: and by the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, the benefit extends to the ‘reigning in life by one,’ Christ Jesus. If the free gift is so given to all men, that this is the end for which it is given, then is this justification of life, and reigning in life by Christ Jesus, as truly within the reach of infants dying in infancy, as within the reach of adults living to years of choice.”

The Rev. S. Comfort in his “Exposition of the Articles” makes the following comments upon the apostle’s language:

"This passage most undeniably describes the relation—we mean in respect to law—in which all are born into the world. The 'all men' and the 'many' in both antitheses refer to the same thing, or rather to the aggregate whole. If this is not placed beyond a doubt by the language used, it would be impossible by any positive assertion.

"The next question is, What relation is predicated of all men as they are born into the world? The answer is, a justified relation. 'The free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' 'Many shall be made righteous.' 'Justification' and 'righteous' describe a justified relation. To deny this is to deny the parallel between Adam and Christ on which the antithesis is based. To deny that all,

*seminally*, in and through the sin of Adam, fell into condemnation, would be not only a flat contradiction of the assertion in this passage, but would be to subscribe to the rankest Pelagianism. As certainly then as a justified relation was forfeited through Adam, so certainly was it restored by Christ. Every man is born in a justified relation, which is retained till it is personally forfeited by actual transgression."

It should be kept in mind that this condemnation and justification came upon the descendants of Adam while as yet they had but a seminal existence. Had the sentence of death been executed, our first parents alone would have been conscious of suffering, because they alone had actual being, and were accountable

to God. "Judgment to condemnation" came upon all men *as they existed in Adam*, and justification unto life came in the same manner. Had there been no reversal of the sentence of death, they would have had no actual existence, and therefore could not have been personal sufferers. Were they now born under condemnation, Christ crucified would be to them an instrument of death and not of life. Instead of being benefited by his coming to earth, they are overwhelmed with everlasting sorrows; while he is deprived of his characteristic glory as the Savior of the world.

It will be well to observe here that there is a wide difference between justification and regeneration. The former is a work of grace wrought in behalf of

man, by which his relation to the law is changed: the latter is a work accomplished in man by which his nature is cleansed and purified, and he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus the Lord. Infants are born justified, but not regenerate: justified from the guilt of original sin through suffering as has been described, many evils from its introduction into the world. They have a fallen and corrupted nature, but are not held morally responsible for its possession, and therefore cannot be in a state of condemnation and exposure to eternal punishment.

This “justification to life” is without conditions in its application to the offspring of Adam. As they had no part in bringing condemnation upon them-

selves through their representative head, so they are not required to comply with any terms in obtaining pardon through the righteousness of Christ their Redeemer. Indeed the whole transaction was completed in the Divine Mind, and made known to Adam before any of his descendants possessed an actual existence. Life itself is received and enjoyed as one of its legitimate results. And as that is unconditionally bestowed, so is the justification through which it is secured. Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

To propose conditions to the dying infant would be highly improper, because it could not possibly comply with them. To insist on their performance would be,

under the circumstances to secure their most certain ruin. Such a course would not well accord with the character of Jehovah. He “sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

In this respect their salvation is placed on different grounds from that of adults. The adult sinner is condemned for his own act, voluntarily committed. He has assumed an attitude of rebellion by his own choice, and it is but reasonable to require him to renounce that attitude and give evidence of his adhesion to the principles of the Divine government. Therefore, to him, faith in Christ is made an indispensable condition of heirship to the heavenly inheritance; and we are taught that while “he that believeth and is baptized shall

be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." From the guilt of original sin God is the common Savior of all men; from that of actual transgression, he is especially the Savior of them that believe. The application of the atonement by which the guilt of actual sin is removed is always conditional: but in the case of Adam's transgression, it is universal and unlimited.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN SECURED THROUGH CHRIST.—CONTINUED.

“Jesus the ancient faith confirms,  
To our great Father given;  
He takes our children to his arms,  
And calls them heirs of Heaven.

“O, God! how faithful are thy ways!  
Thy love endures the same;  
Nor from the promise of thy grace  
Blots out our childrens' name.”

It is proposed in this chapter to notice several additional proofs that persons dying in infancy are saved through the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first to which attention is invited is the covenant relation which they sustain to God.

No sooner had man fallen, than Jehovah made known to him the plan of sal-

vation by grace. The promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and its acceptance through the faith of our first parents, constituted a covenant, which, as we have seen, secured the divine blessing upon the descendants of Adam.

This whole transaction referred directly to Christ, who was to appear in the fullness of time, and by the offering of himself make propitiation for the sins of the world. The wonders of redemption were thus early made known, and salvation secured to believers, on the same terms as in the latter-day glory of the church. This was the first covenant of mercy, complete in itself, and was a remarkable display of the goodness of God towards fallen and guilty man.

But God in the infinitude of his compassion enlarged its provisions from time to time, and brought more clearly before us his character as one that doeth righteousness, and at the same time showeth mercy to the children of his care.

In the covenant made with Abraham the promise was renewed, and the faith of the patriarchs confirmed, with reference to the appearance and final triumph of the Savior of the world. This covenant was not, as some have supposed, confined wholly or even chiefly to the bestowment of national and temporal blessings. It was a general agreement to confer grace upon man, by which he might find favor in the sight of his Maker, and obtain salvation through the gift of his Son. It is true that the Lord promised to bless

Abraham and his descendants after him with great worldly prosperity, and that this was literally fulfilled in their subsequent history. But he did not stop there. The father of the faithful was assured that these blessings were granted as a means of preparing the way for the extension of divine favor to the entire human family. Accordingly we find this provision : "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." And again : "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Saint Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, shows that the seed here spoken of, was none other than Immanuel, the Redeemer of mankind. "He saith not to seeds, as of many ; but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ."

Thus the blessing of Abraham was to

come, not on the Jew merely, but upon the Gentile also; and the covenant is seen in its spiritual import as embracing all for whom Christ died. Its temporal advantages were designed to constitute the Jews the light of the world and the salt of the earth. To their keeping were committed the oracles of God, that through them, the word of life might be proclaimed in all lands. The church was established in their midst, that it might enlarge its borders, and fill the earth with the glory of Him who dwells in the heavens. They thus became the almoners of celestial bounties to the nations that were estranged from God, and without hope in the world.

That it was not temporary in its character is seen in that clause in which the

Lord Jehovah declared it to be “an everlasting covenant.” It did not expire with the ceremonial law, for it constituted no part of that law, and had no immediate connexion with it. The Jewish ritual was not instituted until four hundred and thirty years after the covenant with Abraham. The repeal of the one could not therefore affect the perpetuity of the other. It was not annulled with the abrogation of the privileges granted to the Jews as a people, for it embraced other nations as well as them, and was made for the benefit of all men. Neither did it give way for the introduction of christianity, for it was itself the very germ of the Gospel and included all its essential features. The Gospel confirms and strengthens the covenant, but never comes

in contact with its spiritual and gracious designs. Like its immutable author, it is itself immutable. The New Testament is a reiteration of its principles, and an inspired commentary on its glorious provisions.

That the Abrahamic covenant included infant children and conferred upon them the blessings of Heaven, no one will presume to doubt. They were to receive the sign and the seal of the compact and thus become interested parties to its fulfillment. By circumcision they were introduced into the visible church, and allowed to share its richest favors. This could not have been, had they remained in a state of condemnation and exposure to the wrath of God.

The perpetuity of this covenant of grace

proves that infants are still comprised in the church of God. The rich boon once bestowed upon the world has never been taken away. The law of grace is unrepealed and the blessings of heaven are not lessened. It is not the province of the Gospel to restrict the privileges with which human probation has been crowned but to enlarge and extend them. The doctrines of the cross, most certainly, have not cut off any class of men from the hope of eternal life. Infants have been numbered with the people of God, have been incorporated into his church, and have received the symbols of the divine compassion, and they can forfeit these privileges only by open rebellion, after having reached the age of accountability. To suppose them in a different position now

from that which they occupied in the days of Abraham is unscriptural and absurd. Their nature has undergone no change. Their essential conditions, liabilities, and capacities are the same as formerly. Then, they were the subjects of grace and heirs of heaven, and unless Jehovah himself has changed, they are still the same.

Secondly. The sayings and examples of Christ when upon earth, establish the doctrine contended for in these pages. “Then were brought unto him little children that he should put his hands on them and pray ; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed.” Math. XIX, 13, 15.

That these were really "little children" is evident from the circumstance that they did not come to Christ of their own accord but were "brought" by those who wished to secure a blessing in their behalf. It is also seen in the assertion of Saint Mark: "And he took them up in his arms and blessed them." Whatever, therefore, the import of this transaction may be, it must relate to infants who are as yet incapable of moral conduct. No other class of persons can possibly be meant in the descriptions quoted above.

It is not remarkable that the disciples rebuked those who sought the blessing of Jesus on their children, for they had not yet entirely freed themselves from erroneous impressions concerning Messiah's kingdom. They still supposed it was to

be one of worldly splendor, and regarded all his movements as having a tendency to, and being prompted by the design of its establishment, on the ruin of existing institutions. It was not in accordance with their opinions of his dignity and power, for the son of man to condescend to the notice of children, and especially to take in his arms the tender babes of those around him, and in sweetest accents of love pronounce them heirs of his heavenly dominion. When Jesus saw what they were doing he was "much displeased," and at once exclaimed, "Suffer little children and forbid them not to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" must here mean one of two things:—

Either the church militant on earth, or the church triumphant in glory. Though employed in the Bible with some variety of signification it always implies a state of grace. The members of this kingdom are, without exception, members of the family of God. So far as concerns the general argument, it is immaterial in which of the above senses it is here taken. He who dies being a member of the Kingdom of God on earth, enters at once into the Kingdom of God in Heaven; for though divided by death's cold river, there is but one Kingdom, above and below. Its members though now separated for a season, will yet meet on the other side of Jordan.

"And sing the Lamb in hymns above  
Who once have sung in hymns below."

It is plain that Christ intended to be understood that infants themselves are the lawful members of this heavenly Kingdom. When he used this language they were before him, and in the presence of those to whom he was speaking. He made them the subject, as well as occasion of his discourse. To suppose that he meant to say, not that children personally were members of this kingdom, but simply those who resemble them in moral dispositions, is contrary to the obvious import of the terms employed. If children are not heirs how can those be who are like them? Why does the Savior say, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven," when to be like those very children, is to be an

alien from God? To conclude that he did not mean to convey the idea that little children are heirs of heaven, is to take away the ground of the comparison and destroy the beauty of the metaphor. Again, the Savior said: "Who so receiveth one such little child in my name receiveth me."

The identity which the Scriptures represent as existing between Christ and his disciples, is founded wholly upon the relation which subsists between them. His followers are made "one with him" by becoming members of his mystical body, the Church, and thus being incorporated into his heavenly family. It is in this respect only, that children can be said to be "one with Christ," and the identity is doubtless here spoken of, with

reference to their position in the covenant of grace. The child, that he took in his arms, was a member of the Old Testament Church by virtue of its circumcision, and the Son of God was now perfecting the scheme of redemption in which it was included. By this impressive act, he taught those around him that this holy relationship was continued under the new dispensation ; and that infants were to be in time to come, as they had been in time past, included in the universal Church which constitutes the body of Christ.

Thirdly. The character of Jehovah as revealed in his written word, secures the everlasting happiness of the dying infant. God is holy, just, and good. In him there is no unrighteousness at all. As the judge of all the earth he will most certainly do right.

Now, nothing would be more manifestly opposed to the principles of justice, than the infliction of severe penalties upon a class of persons guilty of no crime, and charged with no dereliction of duty. Sin is the transgression of the law; it is an act of rebellion against the most high God. As such it deserves to be punished, and God cannot look upon it with allowance. But infant children have not sinned; neither have they had capacity to violate any principle of God's rectoral government. The Gospel under which they live, condemns them not, for they have done nothing by which to merit its condemnation. They have broken no commandment, for they have never yet been the subjects of moral discipline. If justice makes her award according to the deserts of men, it can never consign the

unsinning infant to endless woe. Such an act would be an outrage to every principle of righteousness and true holiness.

It would also conflict with the beneficence of God. Goodness goes not hand in hand with unrighteousness. To damn an infant would be injustice in the highest degree, and therefore cannot be consistent with the merciful character of the Deity. If one is lost, it must have been created for that purpose, and so far as we can see, for that purpose alone. Its ruin was rendered unavoidable before existence was granted. No opportunities of recovery were ever given. No end has been accomplished by its brief stay on earth, save that an immortal spirit has been launched into existence, doomed to the vengeance of eternal fire, and unconditionally overwhelmed with the horrors

of the second death. A thought more dishonoring to God never found place in the human heart. A sentiment more horrible was never uttered by the Cannibals of the South Sea Islands. It outrages every principle of the God-head, clothes the brightest glories of the Gospel with the emblems of woe, and turns our highest aspirations into the breathings of despair. An infant in Hell! Perish the thought forever. Let not God be thus dishonored in the sight of his creatures. Rob him not of the purest and best attributes of his being. Sink him not below the level of heathen deities. Blaspheme not his holy name by charging him with injustice and holding up his Gospel to the scorn and contempt of the world. He is the Lord. He so loved the world as to

give his only begotten Son to make propitiation for the sins of men. God is love. He loved us before we could love him. He loves our little children better than we ourselves can love them. When he recalls them from earth he takes them to a heaven of love.

“With flowing tears and thankful hearts  
We give them up to thee ;  
Receive them Lord into thine arms,  
Thine may they ever be.”

The character of God, and the principles of the Gospel already elucidated, show that the blessings of eternal life, are unconditionally bestowed upon all those who die before reaching the age of accountability. The distinction so prominently made between “elect infants” and “others not elected” has no sanction from the word of God. If any doctrine is clearly revealed in the Bible, and is found to accord with the highest exercise

of reason, it is, that a moral purity exists among all who have not, as yet, sinned against heaven. Any other view must be founded on the idea of a limited atonement, which necessarily includes the doctrine of infant damnation, and is therefore essentially absurd. It must also make God a respecter of persons, which is contrary to his express declaration. He is not partial in the bestowment of his blessings; for the grace which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. If any are not benefitted thereby, it is because they resist the grace of God, and will not regard divine reproofs. But no such cases occur among persons dying in childhood. They never reject the mediation of Christ, nor resist the influence of the Holy Spirit. These therefore become the sure and efficacious means of their salvation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN SECURED THROUGH CHRIST.—CONCLUDED.

“Oh, let my trembling heart be still,  
While darkness veils this mortal eye,  
And wait thy wise, thy holy will.  
Wrapped yet in tears and mystery,  
I cannot, Lord, thy purpose see,  
Yet all is well, since ruled by thee.

“Thus trusting in thy love, I tread  
The narrow path of duty on,  
What though some cherished joys are fled ?  
What though some flattering dreams are gone ?  
Yet fairer, brighter joys remain ;  
Why should my spirit then complain ?

How mysterious the ways of Providence ! How inscrutable the plans of Him who is too wise to err ! He has taken away the child on whom thine affections were so fondly centred. Great indeed is thy loss, and heavy the hand of

affliction that rests upon thee. But shall we presume to challenge the wisdom of Heaven's decree, or murmur at the dealings of God with us? What is man that he should find fault with the Almighty, or doubt that He who knows all things from the beginning, understands what is for his glory and our good? Could we see all the benign and varied results that may spring from this affliction; could we behold the glory that already clusters around the child that is gone; could we listen to the accents of victory that now fall from immortal lips, we should doubtless not only acquiesce in the dispensation, but rejoice with joy unspeakable. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." At present faith is demanded. Faith in God who doeth all

things well. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

“In another life,” says Fenelon, “we shall see and understand the wonders of His goodness that have escaped us in this; and we shall rejoice at what has made us weep on earth. Alas! in our present darkness, we cannot see either our true good or evil. If God were to gratify our desires, it would be our ruin. He saves us by breaking the ties that bind us to earth. We complain because God loves us better than we know how to love ourselves. God takes the poisoner’s cup from our hands, and we weep as a child weeps when its mother takes away the shining weapon, with which it would pierce its own bosom. He wounds only to heal the diseases of our souls.

Let us then in the hour of our calamity, hold fast by this conviction, and say with Job, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ His mercy can be my support here, and my recompense hereafter.”

Jesus died for that child. With his own most precious blood, he purchased for it eternal life. He intrusted it to thy care a while, and has now recalled his own. Though gone it is not lost. It is a blessed thought, that when our children die, they sleep in Jesus. They have escaped earth’s sorrows and secured heaven’s joys. The little one that was torn from thine arms, has been transplanted to a more congenial clime, and is thus spared the ills which it must have buffeted in a world of sin. One child, at least, is provided for forever. Others may grow up

in sin, live in opposition to God, die in their iniquity, and be lost ; but this one is safe. Friends below may weep their loss, and mourn that they are left alone, but their tears should fall for themselves and not for the child that has gone to the world of bliss. Our loss becomes their infinite gain. Already the shout of triumph resounds through the celestial city, and a new song of redeeming grace is added to the full chorus that is heard around the throne.

The child is gone. But remember it is happier now than it would have been had it remained on earth. You sought its happiness here, and were willing to make great sacrifices to secure it. Your best endeavors were in vain ! it was a sufferer and must have remained so while life

was lengthened out. Such is the common lot of man. But God in his mercy has taken it from a world of woe and crowned it with everlasting joys. It has become a ministering spirit to those who shall be heirs of salvation. It dwells beside the river of life that flows through the midst of the Paradise of God, having gone in, to go out no more forever.

To have educated that child according to the best of your abilities, and to have witnessed on earth, the achievements of its growing intellect would have been delightful indeed. But the privilege is not yours. It is in the school of angels now, and, perhaps already wiser than Solomon, it soars into those regions of knowledge, that pass human understanding. And what a change is this. "Yes-

terday," in the language of Rev. S. J. Prime, "an infant in his mother's arms ; to-day a seraph in the midst of seraphims, burning with excessive glory in the presence of God. As if an angel had lost his way, and for a few days had wandered among the sons of men, till his companions suddenly discovered him in this wilderness, and caught him, and bore him off to his native residence among the blessed ; so the child is taken kindly in the morning of its wanderings, and gathered among the holy, and brought home to his Father's house. How pure his spirit now ! how happy he is now !

"Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there  
Around my Savior stand ;"

and among them I behold the infant forms of those, whose little graves were wet with the tears of parental love. I hear

their infant voices in the song. Do you see in the midst of that bright and blessed throng the child you mourn? *What would tempt him back again?* Bring out the playthings that he loved on earth, the toys that filled his childish heart with gladness, and pleased him on the nursery floor, the paradise that was ever bright when he smiled within it; hold them up, and ask him to throw away his harp, and leave the side of his new found friends, and the bosom of his Savior; and would he come to be a boy again, to live, and laugh, and love again, to sicken, suffer, die, and *perhaps be lost!* I think he would stay."

Were an earthly monarch to send his messenger to some humble dwelling, to select a fair and promising child, that it

might be removed into his family, and trained for the throne, it would be esteemed an especial mark of honor. There are but few parents that would not be delighted by the evidence of such peculiar regard. The blessing conferred on their offspring would be regarded as a token of favor to them. So it is when God takes little children to the Kingdom of Heaven. They go into the presence of the King of Kings, and sit down on his throne. Instead of being a mark of displeasure, here is the highest display of divine love. God has taken an infant to his arms, and placed it among the brightest and best of created beings. In this is seen, not the kindlings of wrath, but the shinings forth of a father's face.

There is love also in thus chastening

those who are left behind. The author last quoted has furnished us with the following beautiful simile: "I have seen a shepherd striving to drive his flock into his fold, while they would refuse to enter, and prefer to wander off into the highways, where they were in danger of being torn and lost. At length when wearied with efforts to urge them in, he takes a lamb into his arms, and folds it gently in his bosom and walks into the inclosure, while the mother follows, and the whole flock come on, and are soon folded in the place of safety and peace. So have I seen a family, whom God would win to his house and home in Heaven; but they became worldly minded and wandered away among the dangerous paths of a deceitful, unsatisfying earth; and when

his calls, and commands, have been lost upon them, he has taken their lamb, their pet lamb, their youngest child, and laid it in his own bosom ; and then, O, then, how readily the mother and all the little flock have followed him to the gate of the celestial city, into which he has entered with their darling in his arms. It was love, infinite love, that ordered such a plan, and it will be felt the more, the more the heart is softened, and the eyes are opened, to behold the hand that doeth it."

The child is taken away, but you will see it again. Though dead it is alive, though lost it is found. It will not return to the world that we inhabit, but we shall go to its heavenly dwelling place. The Jordan of death, which now separates us, will soon be past, and parents and

children shall meet around the throne. There will be mutual greetings then, such as earth has never witnessed. The infant that has gone before will welcome those who were left behind, to the glorious inheritance of the saints on high. In language familiar to all God's people, we can almost hear them exclaiming :

“Come with us, and behold far higher sight  
Than e'er thy heart desired, or hope conceived.  
See, yonder is the glorious hill of God,  
'bove angels' gaze, in brightness rising high.  
Come, join our wing, and we will guide thy flight  
To mysteries of everlasting bliss;  
The tree, and fount of life, the eternal throne,  
And presence chamber of the King of Kings.”

The following lines are said to have been penned by a father in the midst of deep and pressing sorrows. A blooming and attractive daughter had been laid in the tomb. During a season of mental depression and gloom, his wife, like an

angel came before him and said, "Grieve not my husband that one is lost to us. Think of her only as being happy in Heaven." Then wrote the husband and father,

"'Grieve not that she is lost to us.' It was her gain. Oh, how infinitely her gain. Think of the storms of life, the cares and sorrows that hover round us here. Think of the blighted hopes ; the crushed affections ; the temptations that beset the living ; the possible sin and fall. Think of the fearful hazards of life's game ; the struggle against poverty ; the strife with fate.

"'Grieve not that she is lost to us.' Remember her in her purity, on whose white robe no stain of sin had fallen ; who had no need of repentance for trans-

gression; whose cheek had never been moistened by the tear of affliction, and whose aspirations belonged only to Heaven.

“‘Grieve not that she is lost to us.’ Her pure spirit is with us still. We can hear its gentle breathings, and feel the fannings of its soft wing. It will nestle in our bosom at night, and carry our morning prayer upward to God. Her sweet smile will bless us, and her mellow voice will fall in music tones on our hearts. We will remember her, the beloved and the good. From the grave where she sleeps, and the flowers that bloom above her, shall come strength to our hopes, an incense that shall cheer us through life—a voice that shall remind us of our duties here and call us to our home at last.

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“‘Think of her only as being happy in Heaven!’ There spoke the mother and the Christian, the heart’s unselfish affection, and the faith that leans upon God. “Think of her only as being happy in Heaven.” In the green pastures beside the living streams, there lingers our lamb. Her little brothers are with her, and the good shepherd has charge of his flock.

“‘Think of her only as being happy in Heaven.’ In the home of the blessed, in the sun-light of eternal joy, in the city of God, hovering, a glorified spirit, round the throne of Him who is all love, and basking in his smiles. Beyond and above earth’s toils and cares, where affliction can never come, where no tears are shed, where peace and happiness reign forever.”

Thus, mourner, when you think of the little one that is dead, think of it not as mouldering in the grave, but as walking among the shining hosts of the celestial city. It is a noble dictate of the christian's faith, and not an illusion of fancy, to consider that loved one as a pure beatified spirit, robed in garments of beauty and beckoning thee to the skies. Other children are there also, basking in the sunlight of eternal joy. Jesus, the sinner's friend is with them, and he has become their everlasting Savior.

"I take these little lambs, said he,  
And lay them in my breast;  
Protection they shall find in me,  
In me be ever blest.

"Death may the bands of life unloose,  
But can't dissolve my love;  
Millions of infant souls compose  
The family above."

Said a minister who had lost children

by death, "When I used to think of my kindred, I thought of them as living in this world, for they were here. The love I had for them was a weight, which bound me down to earth, and made me wish to stay in their midst. But since my children have died, I never think of friends, but I also think of Heaven, and my Savior with whom they dwell. The ties that bound me to them, and caused me to love them as my own soul, now draw me to God, and awaken all my energies to seek the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness. I can already see that "it is good for me that I have been afflicted; and I expect to see this more clearly when our broken household is reunited, and our children are with us to be separated no more forever."

Such is the language of faith in the hour of affliction. Mourner, look beyond the things of this world. God is leading you to the realms of bliss, though it is by a dark and stormy pathway. He has a right to take away that which he has given you. He gives but to bless, and his purpose to benefit you will be best accomplished by just such sorrows as those through which you are now passing. You have the assurance, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to the called according to his purpose."

Now that your child is gone, do you wish him back again? Would you bring him back if you could? The pious Fenelon as he beheld the remains of his son, whom he tenderly loved, exclaimed:

“ There he lies, and all my worldly happiness lies buried with him. But if the turning of a straw would call him back to life, I would not for ten thousand be the turner of that straw in opposition to the will of God.”

Consider also, that whatever your grief may have been now that your children are dead, it might have been much greater had they lived long upon the earth. They might have been such great sufferers that you would have felt unutterable agony in beholding them. Their sorrows now are at an end ; for “ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are passed away.”

Though to a parent's mind it will seem hardly possible, yet they might have been seduced by the tempter of souls, to the commission of great crimes, and thus have brought your gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. Bitter experience once led a Christian parent to say, "It is better to mourn ten children dead, than one living." Then trust in God, who doeth all things well; who saw the peril and has taken your offspring from it.

A pious father who had lost the youngest of three sons, and who through faith was enabled to rise above earth's trials, is represented as making use of the following language:—

"I cannot tell what form is his,  
What look he weareth now,  
Nor guess how bright a glory crowns  
His shining seraph-brow.

" The thoughts that fill his sinless soul,  
The bliss that he doth feel,  
Are numbered with the secret things,  
Which God doth not reveal.

" But I know—for God hath told me this—  
That now he is at rest,  
Where other blessed infants are,  
On their loving Savior's breast.

" Whate'er befalls his brethren twain,  
His bliss can never cease ;  
Their lot may here be grief and pain,  
But his is perfect peace.

" It may be that the tempter's wiles,  
Their souls from bliss can sever ;  
But if our own poor faith fail not  
He must be ours forever.

" When we think of what our darling is  
And what he still must be ;  
When we think on that world's perfect bliss  
And this world's misery ;

" When we groan beneath this load of sin,  
And feel this grief and pain ;  
Oh ! we'd rather lose our other two  
*Than have him back again.*"

















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